

STATEMENT OF THE COMMITTEE

OF THE

ST. GABRIEL STREET CHURCH,

DETAILING THE HISTORY OF

THE RECENT PROCEEDINGS,

*By which the Congregation was Deprived of the Services of the Free
Church Deputies, and brought to the verge of Dissolution ;*

WITH AN

APPENDIX,

Containing Correspondence and Documentary Evidence.

MONTREAL:

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1845.

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STATEMENT
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Committee St. Gabriel Street Church,
DETAILING THE HISTORY, &c. &c.

The Committee of St. Gabriel Street Church feel, that however painful and mortifying may be the developments, which they are now called to give forth to the Church and to the public, they may not shrink from the performance of a duty, which has in fact been forced upon them, for the vindication of their own character, and that of the Church, which they represent, and in justification of the course of defensive action, into which they have been driven, for the protection of the interests and rights, nay, more, for the preservation of the independence and even existence of this Congregation. Could they be persuaded, that the cause of true religion, that the character, the independence, the best interests of the Church, in this land, could have been better served by an entire suppression of this history, it would have been felt, on their part, a real privilege to have been permitted to leave it to rest in oblivion. But believing that there is no other way left, to dispel the injurious misrepresentations, which have gone abroad, to disabuse the public mind, to obtain effectual redress for the wrongs, which have been inflicted upon the Congregation of St. Gabriel Street Church, and through them upon the general cause—upon the entire Body of which they form a part,—the Proprietors are persuaded that they are fulfilling a high, and indeed, an indispensable duty, not more to themselves and those whom they represent, than to the Presbyterian Church of Canada and the Free Church of Scotland, in giving publicity to this narrative. There is no other means,—whereby it is possible to communicate authentic and satisfactory information of the whole case, so that those who desire to form a just estimate of the

character of the agents and of the transactions may not be misled by partial or coloured representations,—than that of publishing the proceedings in their order and connection, accompanied with the necessary documentary evidence; and to this determination, after anxious and mature deliberation, the Committee, on behalf of the Proprietors and the Congregation, have felt they were of necessity brought.* Had due regard, indeed, been paid by the parties to the decision of the Presbytery, or had there even been any disposition manifested by those, with whom we are at issue, to make reparation for the wrongs, by which this Church has felt itself aggrieved, or did there not exist good ground for the apprehension that an impartial and faithful representation of our cause, is not likely, through any other channel, to reach the Mother Church, or even to come under the view of our Church Courts and our own Ministers and Office-bearers in this land, the painful necessity of this publication of our grievances, might have been spared. As it is, it may be fondly hoped that the publication of this case will prove conducive to the best interests of the Church by pointing attention to past errors, as a beacon, to lead not only to the adoption of suitable remedies, but, what is more, of effectual means, to prevent their recurrence, and in future to regulate the intercourse between the Mother and the Colonial Churches, in such a way as may perpetuate that happy reciprocity of confidence and affection which is fraught with such manifold blessings—*especially to the latter.*

In order to lay open the origin and springs of all these movements, and to preserve the order and continuity of the history, it is necessary to begin with an account of the Free Church Committee, whose members have been the prime, indeed the sole and exclusive actors in the whole of these transactions. It is important, for the information of those at a distance, to state who are the members of this Committee, how it was originally constituted, with what manner of right, authority or qualifications this self-constituted body assumed the extraordinary power and influence which they have so long wielded, and still continue to wield, with no apparent abatement of vigor, as if they were the legitimate and trustworthy representatives of our Church in this great and rising Colony. The number of the original members was twelve—Messrs. J. Redpath, J. R. Orr, J. M'Kay, A. Frazer, D. Frazer, I. M'Iyer, A. M'Goun, W. Hutchison, J. Morrison, D. Fergusson, W. M'Intosh and Dr. M'Nider. Now without the slightest

* See Appendix [A.]

detract from the merits of these individuals, who for their years, education, and condition in life are respectable—their most partial admirers will not, we presume, claim for them the prerogative of being leaders and directors, in what pertains to the conduct of ecclesiastical affairs, nor think it reasonable, because they are useful citizens, good merchants, skilful mechanics, that they should be authorized or permitted to exercise the functions of Doctors of Divinity, or Reformers and Legislators of the Church? Three or four of the members are very young men: four or five are respectable mechanics: three of them master tradesmen; one a Physician of not very old standing, while the others are clerks in mercantile houses of this city: The two leading and most influential members are Mr. Redpath and Mr. Orr, who have been active and useful citizens, forward in the promotion of public improvement and the cause of religion and of missionary enterprise; but we are assured that they are far from being the men to whom the enlightened portion, even of the Religious public, would be disposed to concede the leading prominent place which they have assumed.

This Committee, originally self-constituted, has never yet called any public meeting or taken any steps to obtain a more catholic basis or a more extensive organization. They have not submitted to the presbytery or to the public, any information of their constitution, views or principles. They have conducted their correspondence and business, so far, in a secret and irresponsible manner, that no more has been made known of their acts *than a call*, transmitted through Dr. Burns, and perhaps some letters which have been published in Scotland, or than what may have transpired from the private communications of the individual members to their friends. The professed object of the Committee, as declared by themselves, was to enlighten the public mind of Canada on the Free Church question. With a spirit and views so Catholic, it might have been expected, that they would have been happy to embrace the earliest opportunity of enlisting in the cause, of which they had thus come forward to undertake the voluntary championship, as large a portion of the wealth, the intelligence, and influence of this great city as possible. At the public breakfast given to Dr. Burns in May, 1844, it was resolved unanimously and by acclamation, that immediate steps should be taken to extend and strengthen the Committee and to make it a fair and, as much as possible, adequate representation of the Free Church body in Montreal. But, like all self-constituted bodies, they

do not seem to have relished the proposal of either dividing their power or of giving publicity to their proceedings. It is a singular fact, in harmony with this, and not less indicative of the determination of the Committee to maintain a secret and exclusive influence, in the prosecution of their enterprise, that, while professing that it was the motive and end of their organization, to enlighten the public mind in regard to the Free Church cause, they never saw fit to call Mr. Esson to their counsels, even after the disruption, although on that occasion the part which he acted drew forth their distinguished approbation. Why, we would ask, did the Committee shut out from a participation in their arduous and honourable labours, those whose intelligence, influence, and active co-operation would have been of eminent service to the cause? *Perhaps* there was a secret fear, lest Mr. Esson might have embarrassed them by his presence: and the same views which led them in his absence to disorganize this Church, it is not uncharitable, to divine, had influenced them to dispense with his services in the outset of their public career. As the event has fully proved *theirs*, never was the large, liberal, and generous aim, in the comprehensive spirit of Christian charity and enlightened evangelical zeal, to cover the wide field of destitution in this populous city, and to embrace within the pale of the new Church, of which they were ambitious of having the honor of being the founders—all the adherents of our cause. No! their drift has been all along to organize a Church—in which their party should be absolute and supreme—in which their peculiar views savoring—more of Congregationalism and Independency than of Presbytery, should be embodied, and at all hazards carried out, as if it had been a truth demonstrated, that on the successful issue of this experiment, depended the whole hope of the Church and of the cause.

But the Free Church cause had another representative in this city besides the Committee of *twelve*. Nay, *one* too which had the *honor*, and alas that we are constrained to add, *the misfortune* of sending unto that Committee nearly one half of the entire body of its original members. This congregation, at an early period of the struggle, entered the field, and although its more fortunate *ally*, or, as the event has shown, its *rival* has thrown into the shade, and latterly almost succeeded in shutting out from public view, its services to the cause—truth and justice demand that they be placed once more under the public eye, and come in for their due share of whatever merit may belong to those who fought the battle of Free Church principles in this land.

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The only pulpit where the cause was first expounded, vindicated and recommended, was the pulpit of this Church. The first pamphlet issued in advocacy of the cause, before the disruption, came from the pen of its minister. The second followed from the same pen, immediately after that event. And although it has been made a question, as what will not the selfishness and worse than selfishness of party spirit make a question, whether this Church had actually given in its adhesion to the New Synod, or even whether it could be considered, as being in connection with that body; it can be demonstrated, that not one of all our Churches bore a more unequivocal and reiterated testimony of their attachment and devotion to the principles, which gave rise to the disruption.

A Congregational Meeting was first held, in which the question of adherence to the *Presbyterian Church of Canada* was carried with only one dissenting voice. A meeting of Session followed, in which the same decision was carried with only one dissident—and the meeting of the Proprietors, immediately consequent upon these two, gave the final seal and ratification, precluding one would have thought, the very possibility of any scepticism, in a candid mind, as to the sincerity of their attachment to the cause. An account of these meetings was published in the *Banner* newspaper, and yet all this was too little to quell the obstinate scepticism of the Free Church Committee, who still contended, that the constitution of the Church stood unchanged, and scrupled not to add, that the proprietors would never give their consent to its amendment. The value of this reiterated testimony, will be appreciated by those who know, that besides the certain loss of the government salary enjoyed by their Minister; a very valuable amount of property, comprising, the Manse and the land pertaining to it, the Church and ground on which it is built, were thereby brought into jeopardy, and are only *now* in the way of being secured. After all this had been done, it might have been confidently anticipated, that none of the Churches of this land would have been more honoured or favoured, by all who loved our cause or could appreciate its friends or benefactors, than St. Gabriel Street Church. None would have suspected, that those at least, who professed the same principles, and bore the same name, would have been found indifferent, much less hostile to a community, which had signalised its zeal in this great and good cause. But these are not all its services. It was called upon to make another sacrifice for the general good of the Church. Its Minister was appointed Professor in the

new College, and the Church was deprived of his services, at a season when it was perilous, so recently, after the disruption, to take away any means of security and protection, and, as the event shewed, it had well nigh proved fatal.* All things having been arranged to the satisfaction of the Minister and people of St. Gabriel Street Church, to supply Mr. E's. place, and provide for the service of his flock, nothing was needed but a faithful fulfilment of the compact, to have insured a happy final issue.

And here it becomes important to direct attention to a fact, which, it may be feared, paved the way for the troubles and distractions that ensued. In consequence of Mr. Esson's removal to Toronto, the Presbytery of Montreal, was in a manner broken up. Mr. Clugston and Mr. Clark, were at so great a distance, that they could not, especially in winter, attend any of the Meetings—Mr. Henry was at the distance of 40 miles from Montreal, and Mr. Black of 25,—and there was no alternative left, but to appoint a central Missionary Committee in the city, on whom all the power and responsibilities of a Presbytery, were for a time devolved. In these circumstances, it so happened that this Committee was constituted of the identical individuals, who formed the Free Church Committee. In this position to which they were now elevated, they should have felt themselves bound in duty and honour, to suspend the prosecution of all party ends and interests, and to have watched over all the Churches under their care *with equal and impartial* regard. St. Gabriel Street Congregation, more especially, in the absence of their own Minister, and after the unexpected disappointment, caused by the detention of Mr. Miller in Nova Scotia, was entitled to the services of the most efficient Missionary, at the disposal of the Committee. But they saw fit to withdraw Mr. Leishman, who had been sent down with the special view of taking the place, which Mr. Miller had been expected to occupy, and to employ him as a general Missionary. The Committee, who were bound, in the exercise of the Presbyterial power and responsibilities vested in them, to have acted as the guardians and conservators of this church, seemed to seize with avidity the moment, as opportune for carrying out their own scheme of building up a new Church, and, as essential to the fulfilment of their plan, to effect the previous subversion of the old one. They forgot that they were acting on behalf of the Presbytery and Synod, and that the course which they thought fit to pursue, was a violation of the faith and honour of the whole Church, pledged during Mr. Esson's absence, for the guar-

* See Mr. Esson's Letter to the Presbytery [C.]

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dianship of his flock. Had the Missionary Committee been guided by the spirit of Christian wisdom and charity, they would most scrupulously have abstained from any measure or movement, which might have endangered the peace and security of our infant Church. Instead therefore, of hastening to form a new congregation, they would have recommended to Mr. Bonar, who reposed so much confidence in their knowledge and experience, to go on to preach the gospel, and striving together with him, to open a wide door to all to come in, would thus have allowed full time for the preparatory work of leavening the body well, before they proceeded to the dispensation of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper; or even hazarded any attempt towards organization, and having thus united and consolidated the body, it would have been easy to obtain their hearty and unanimous consent to any measures, which they could reasonably have desired, for the better constitution or discipline of the congregation.

What necessity, we demand, was there to have been in such extreme haste to organise a new church, during Mr. Esson's absence, at the instance of a dozen Members of the Free Church Committee, and just to gratify their new-born zeal in favour of a *pet scheme*? Would it not have been much wiser to have waited for Mr. Esson's return, deferring for a short time a movement, which might be detrimental to his interests and those of his flock, and in which it would have been no more than just and reasonable on their part, as well as respectful to him, to have obtained his advice and concurrence, if not his active aid and co-operation? Why was not this done by the Free Church Committee, Mr. Esson's professedly devoted friends? Why was it not done by Mr. Bonar? One of the Members of the Committee has stated in his correspondence with Mr. Esson, that Mr. Bonar "had come out to them (the Committee) and would recognise no other executive authority." It is strongly corroborative of this statement, that not only the earnest remonstrances of Mr. Esson and his congregation, but the decision of the Presbytery of Montreal, and the unequivocal terms of Mr. Arnot's commission,* by which he is instructed to aid in "consolidating the congregation," have all proved unavailing *against the single mind and will* of this Committee, which seems to possess a power and influence paramount to that of the Presbytery, sufficient to annul the commission, and to set aside the instructions of the depu-

* See Appendix [I.]

ties themselves, "a power behind the throne, verily, greater than the throne."

How like a *comedy of errors* or a game at *cross purposes* does the whole of this strange eventful history look in the retrospect? If we open the Free Church record or refer to the public and authenticated reports of the Free Assembly's Colonial Committee, nay more, if we appeal to Mr. Arnot's commission who was sent to succeed Mr. Bonar, and to carry on the work with which he had been previously charged; we find just what equity, reason and common sense would have led us to anticipate that the wisdom of the parent Church had instructed her deputies "to aid the exertions that are being made, to consolidate the Congregation in connexion with the Presbyterian Church of Canada."* They were sent out to minister to the whole body of Free Church adherents, without respect of persons or parties, they were charged not to give up to a part what was meant for the whole, not to divide or disorganize but to unite to consolidate;—They were not wantonly and needlessly to break down the constitution and organisation of Mr. Esson's Church but to fill his pulpit, to supply his place, to consolidate and build up his flock. Was there ever a more palpable contradiction between the spirit and letter of a commission and the manner of its execution? This is a riddle which not *Œdipus's* self could read or resolve. No wonder that the Congregation of St. Gabriel Street Church were puzzled and perplexed when they were gravely told that Mr. Bonar had been sent out not to them, not to occupy Mr. Esson's place and pulpit, but to take advantage of his absence and the defenceless state of his flock in order to organise a new Church for the Committee of *twelve*. *This very seasonable and judicious project* bears evidence upon the face of it that it originated with men of other heads and of other hearts than the venerable and enlightened Fathers who preside over the Counsels of the Mother Church! It bears the genuine and unequivocal stamp of its true fathers and authors, who have signalised themselves in other fields of action in this city by a blind indiscreet and intemperate zeal, as if they thought that the end would sanctify the means—as if the goodness of the motive or the aim could avail as a plea for the unscrupulous violation of the maxims of justice and charity and common fair dealing in the prosecution of it.

To the frequent enquiries, addressed to those who were exclusively cognizant of all that was done or devised in Free Church matters, whether any minister was to be sent out to take Mr. Esson's place,

* See Mr. Arnot's Commission, [G] and Petition of the Elders &c. [H]

it was answered in the affirmative that Mr. Begg or Mr. Bonar was deputed to come out and remain for six months, to be relieved at the end of that period by others in rotation, until a permanent Pastor should be settled. Mr. Bonar arrived in the end of February, and Mr. Burns in preaching his farewell sermon to the congregation of St. Gabriel Street Church, announced that he had come to occupy his place in that pulpit. In fine, there is no mistake, there can be no mistake in the conclusion, that there was every warrant for believing that the faith of the Church at home and in the Colony was fully and solemnly pledged in favour of the peculiar and paramount claims of this congregation. It is not possible for the Free Church Committee to escape the reproach of at least, having been guilty of real dissimulation and of allowing their simple-minded and unsuspecting brethren to be taken by surprise, a surprise such as might easily have been foreseen, had well nigh proved fatal to the independence and even to the existence of the congregation. Was not their reserve and silence in such circumstances, almost a crime towards those who had implicit confidence in their honour and fair dealing, and to whom not a few of them stood in the relation of office-bearers, either in the temporal or spiritual departments, and were therefore bound by the clearest and most imperative obligations of good faith and social duty to those, with whose interests they were officially put in trust, to have given them timely warning of the impending danger, and scrupulously to have abstained from acting in prejudice of their official engagements. To keep them in ignorance until the scheme was all ripe for execution, however much it might tend to facilitate the gaining of their own selfish and party ends, savours more of a Jesuitical spirit and policy than of the guileless simplicity and harmlessness of the wisdom, which is from above. Such counsels and doings cannot and they will not come to good.

In reviewing the negotiations between the two committees, which it were tedious here to detail at length, it is impossible not to be struck at once with the fact, that the people of St. Gabriel Street Church, were shut up at once by the diplomatic craft of the other party, between the horns of a Dilemma.* No manner of choice was left them, between the complete dissolution, at least the temporary and indefinite suspension, of their independent existence and action, as a congregation,—and the withdrawal— instant and inexorable withdrawal, of the Free Church Deputy—and as if it had been an *act of faith, a principle of conscience*, to leave nothing undone, to aggravate the disap-

* See Appendix [K]

pointment, and to drive the unoffending people into a state of despair and rebellion against their Church, and all its constituted authorities—effectual resistance, in the Presbytery, originating with Mr. Bonar and his friends, was made to their petition, to be provided, in this state of unexpected desertion, and during the absence of their own Minister, with the immediate services of a Missionary. Can there remain a shadow of doubt, that there was at the bottom of all this opposition, a spirit that cannot be avowed, while it is impossible to resist the overwhelming evidence of the reality of its existence, and the deformity of its nature? What is a spirit of persecution and selfish sectarian intolerance and animosity if this be not? By its fruits, its manifestations, and its workings, it stands confessed. No art or sophistry, can hide or disguise it. Well might the proposition of Mr. Redpath and his party be denominated, as it was, indignantly and most righteously, by a member of the Committee of temporalities, “as the most one sided proposal he had ever heard.” Indeed, the spirit of the world’s selfishness, seems in a manner quite outdone by this manifestation of sectarian and separatist bigotry, and exclusiveness. For to say nothing of the bowels of christian sympathy and brotherly love, *the love of souls, of all love the purest from any taint of self*, we search in vain to find one vestage of fairness and equity, such as is to be met with in the every day intercourse and transactions, *even of mere men of the world.*

It requires but a passing glance, at the several progressive steps of this correspondence—at once diverting, and melancholy to contemplate—to see, that faster than the one party could yield, one concession after another—did the other rise in its demands. In conclusion, the mask is dropped, the treaty is broken off, and it appears that nothing less than an entire, unconditional surrender of the Church, would do—a suicidal act by which its rulers were modestly required, in the utter extinction of their independent existence, to facilitate and expedite the transference of the members into the new congregation and—with all the power and authority and rule concentrated in the hands of the Free Church Committee—old St. Gabriel’s would have been merged in the new community, without reserving one particle of her rights, or obtaining one condition to mitigate the humiliation and abasement to which she was doomed *without pity and without remorse.*

It only remains, in the next scene of this surprising and eventful drama, briefly to state the result of the application to the Presbytery. We quote here the language of a memorial of the Elders and Minis-

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ters prepared and addressed but not actually submitted to the Synod.

"The people of St. Gabriel Street Church felt satisfied that when the meeting of Presbytery took place, justice would have been done them, and arrangements made to supply the pulpit, but they were doomed to meet with nothing but disappointment. Mr. Leslie, an elder of the Church, attended the meeting, as a member of the Presbytery, and four members of the Temporal Committee were also present. Mr. Esson's resignation was laid before the meeting.* That however was not accepted but referred to the meeting of Synod. Mr. Leslie then made an offer to allow Mr. Leishman £100 for six months, until a permanent Minister was obtained. Mr. Leishman was willing to accept of the proposal, but the appointment was not sanctioned by the meeting, Mr. Leslie then made a motion to the effect that Mr. Leishman be appointed to fill the pulpit until the meeting of Synod (for about three weeks only.) The Moderator recommended that appointment, Mr. Black seconded the motion. Mr. Clugston approved of it. In short, all the old members of Presbytery were favourable. Mr. Bonar was now seen in earnest conversation with Dr. Burns, who immediately rose up and addressed the meeting as to the impropriety of withdrawing Mr. Leishman from destitute places, (although the latter had no appointment at the time,) the Dr. never for a moment taking into consideration the destitute state in which the people of St. Gabriel Street Church had been left. Mr. Black then declined to second the motion, Mr. Clugston changed his opinion, and the Presbytery which was bound to have supplied the pulpit, actually left the congregation destitute of any provision whatever."

"When Mr. Leslie and the members of Committee saw that every reasonable wish of theirs was opposed and such an uncharitable spirit displayed towards them, the first impulse was a determination to separate from the connection for ever; but upon calmer reflection, they considered it wrong to condemn a whole body for the errors (to use no harsher term) of a few Clergymen, and therefore it has been considered prudent to submit this statement to the meeting of Synod."

"Your memorialists feel conscious that they did every thing in their power, consistent with their duty, to avert such an uncalled for, unseemly and injurious division. No paltry feeling of jealousy was displayed by them, on the contrary, a number were willing to have

* See Appendix [I.]

assisted, in proportion to their limited means, in building the new Church from the conviction that there would have been ample room for two; and although there would have been two congregations, we might still have been one people.

"Those who desire to adhere to the St. Gabriel Street Church, feel that in the first place, the Presbytery has abandoned, and has not kept good faith with them; secondly, that they have been shamefully deceived by the party calling themselves the Free Church Committee; and, thirdly, as it appears by a letter received by the Rev. Mr. Henry, the Moderator of the Presbytery from the Committee of the Free Church in Scotland, and subsequently borne out by Mr. Arnot's commission, that Mr. Bonar and other Ministers were intended for the St. Gabriel Street Church, that they have been defrauded of the supply intended for them; since it surely never could have been the intention of the Church at home, to send out able Ministers for the benefit of twelve persons, and to leave the St. Gabriel Street Congregation, which had contended and made sacrifices for the same principles entirely without assistance."

Thus the claim to obtain the humble boon at the hands of the Presbytery, of being permitted to engage the services, of one of the Missionaries to be paid by themselves out of the funds of the Church, offering the handsome salary of £200 per annum, and securing it for six months, was set at nought, in a spirit which it is most painful and mortifying to contemplate, and the impression of which will not soon be effaced, from the minds of those who witnessed the scene. The spectacle was thus exhibited, before the Church and the world, of a congregation, which in the recent contentings for gospel liberty and pure Presbyterian principles in this land, had merited a very different treatment, first deserted by the Free Church deputy, to whose services they had without all question, the best right, then cast off by the Presbytery, to whose guardianship,* like that of a parent, they had a natural, and, as has been already shewn, in the present instance, a peculiar and paramount title—constrained to throw themselves for a time, in this utter desertion and abandonment of those, whose duty it was to have protected them, upon the compassion and kindness of other Christian denominations, until at last, in a state between hope and despair, they were happily led to make their final appeal to the Synod of our Church, for the vindication of their rights and the redress of wrongs, aggravated and embittered in the most extreme degree, by the hands which had inflicted them, and certainly not less, by those who had refused to redress them.

* See Appendix [G] Mr. Esson's letter to the Presbytery [C]

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During the interval between this meeting of the Presbytery and that of the Synod, the pulpit of this Church was precariously and irregularly supplied by the Ministers of various denominations, who, in the good Providence of God, were found most ready and even forward and zealous to come and help us. But it was not possible that this could effectually arrest the process of disorganization and defection from the Church, which the rude and violent shock of this second disruption had caused. The success of the appeal to the Synod and Mr. Esson's arrival, in the execution of the mission with which he was entrusted by that venerable body, to reorganise the Church, and to take the necessary steps for its effective support and service, until a successor should be appointed in his stead, revived the spirit and the hope, that were ready to expire, and by the blessing of God crowning his exertions thus far, the prospect is now brightened, and the interests of the Church both in the spiritual and temporal departments, are on the eve of being placed on such a footing as will ultimately, it is hoped, secure to the people the fullest enjoyment of Gospel privileges and afford a most comfortable provision for the minister.

Upon Mr. Esson's arrival he found that the number of adherents to the church far exceeded the statements which were made to him in the correspondence with the Committee. Of those who had left it under the influence of misrepresentation, a great number returned after his arrival, and there are now above two hundred families upon the list. Mr. Esson lost no time after certain preparatory measures had been adopted and carried out by the temporal authorities, in accordance with the instructions of the Synod, to call a meeting of Presbytery to settle authoritatively the affairs of the Church. In laying his commission on the table of the Presbytery, Mr. Esson begged permission to submit a simple and, as he believed, it would prove, an effectual method of accommodating all differences, and restoring and perpetuating peace, confidence and unity, between the sister congregations, adding that if his mediation and plan of adjustment or any one equivalent, that might be suggested by any other member, were accepted by all parties, there would be no necessity to enter upon a discussion full of peril, and certain to create unpleasant and it might be feared angry and bitter feelings. He laboured to impress upon the minds of the Presbytery that the alienation caused by the withdrawal of the Free Church deputy from his flock, would be embittered and aggravated every day to the

great prejudice and dishonour of our common cause, and that unless the Presbytery forthwith interposed, the weight of its authority to enforce an equal apportionment to both, of whatever provision could be made available, during the period that both, were dependent, for ministerial service, upon the Mother and the Colonial Churches, there could be no hope of a termination of the evil,—that it was palpably iniquitous that the elder congregation should be deprived altogether of the services of Mr. Bonar and Mr. Arnot, and that these services should be exclusively engrossed by one that at the time of their arrival had no existence, and that finally, with such an easy and equitable means of at once settling the question, as it became Christians, the Presbytery were called upon to arrest the inevitable mischiefs of continued and growing jealousy and discord by a resolute and vigorous exercise of the power wherewith it was vested. Such a decision, made in the spirit of Christian wisdom and charity, and accepted in the spirit of meekness and submission to ecclesiastical authority, would have the effect of wiping off at once the reproach which had been brought upon our Church and our cause, and of finally extinguishing any painful feelings or angry passions that might have been awakened. Mr. Redpath hereupon rose up to declare for himself and his party that they could not accede to Mr. Esson's proposal and had no overtures of reconciliation and adjustment on their side to submit. The Presbytery then agreed to hear Mr. Esson's statement and to enter upon the full discussion of the question. It is not necessary to embody that statement here or to detail at length the progress and tenor of the statements and reasonings on both sides. A paper was read by Mr. Redpath and some letters from the correspondence of the Free Church Committee, but nothing was adduced that had any relevancy or bearing upon the points at issue. The letters which were produced were found to be in a great measure illegible and there was not any shadow of proof in aught that came before the court, that Mr. Bonar or Mr. Arnot were warranted to withdraw their ministrations from St. Gabriel Street Church. Indeed, how is it possible that they could have brought out any instructions or warrant for taking a course which was as little foreseen or expected as were the events which led to it, events such as they did not anticipate, and which could not therefore have influenced or even entered into their calculations. Mr. Bonar, it is undeniable, on occasion of the unexpected contingency of the disruption of the united body of worshippers, to whom he first ministered in St. Gabriel Street Church, was left abso-

lutely and entirely to his own discretion, in all the part that he afterwards acted, in this new, and to him altogether unlooked for conjuncture of affairs. We might confidently, put it to the good sense and candour of the deputies themselves, whether, where the disruption took place in the united body of hearers, to whom they had been ministering hitherto, as one whole, and who had all a right to claim an equal participation in their pastoral services, it was not manifestly due, after the separation, to extend to the one section no less than to the other, the benefit of those ministrations, which were originally *designed*, as they were in the first instance, in point of fact, *given* to the whole. We would, with all respect and deference, put it to the Free Church deputies, whether it was not incumbent on them in such a crisis and in such a delicate position, as they found themselves, between two adverse parties, to have referred the matter to the Church courts, and thereby relieved themselves of all personal responsibility? Whether we look to Scriptural or ecclesiastical law, Presbyterial polity or the maxims of sound wisdom, can there be a doubt, that, it would have been wise and right, on their part, to have at least yielded a ready and hearty obedience to the decision of the Church authorities in this land, who, being upon the spot, and intimately acquainted with the circumstances of the country, were surely the most enlightened and competent judges, and not have given a practical warrant to the statement, that "Mr. Bonar came out to the Free Church Committee, and that they were the only authority he would recognize." Had the Free Church Committee, itself, entertained consistent and enlightened views and principles, in regard to Church discipline, for which they profess to be zealous, they would never have presumed to determine upon so hazardous a movement, without expounding their purpose to the judicatories of the Church, and asking counsel of them. They have acted in this instance, at least, as Independents and Congregationalists, not as Presbyterians; whose characteristic maxim it is to defer more to the Church authorities, as they rise in the scale and gradation of the successive judicatories.

As the Free Church Committee have assumed the character, and stood forth in the attitude of censors and reformers towards the Church in this land, they will have no reason for surprise or complaint if we conclude this statement, by instituting a *scrutiny of their principles* and the exemplification which they have exhibited of their operation since the new Church was formed, *as free and unreserved* as we have done of *their proceedings*. "Thou that teachest another

teachest thou not thyself." He who sets up as a reformer in the Church, or as a prophet in Israel, has no right to be offended, if we say to him, "Physician heal thyself.?"

First, then we charge these gentlemen with the *fact*, if not the *guilt*, of schism. We challenge them to show a cause for the late separation which had any existence out of their own imagination, or rather out of their own ungenerous and uncharitable suspicions, which the event has proved to be utterly groundless, or which can be sustained on any principles, not savouring of pharisaism or separatist bigotry, and tending to shut out perishing sinners, which all men are by nature, depriving them, as in this case, of a preached Gospel, under the plea of zeal for greater purity of discipline or a higher toned spirituality than can be attained without a sifting or elective process, altogether at variance with the genius and end of the Gospel, of which we confidently affirm that the capital maxim,—the fundamental principle,* is, "Compel them to come in, that my house be filled;" and if, in the language of the apostle, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God," is it not the first and chiefest duty of the Church, "to compel them to come in"? The first the principal step towards the world's evangelization, is to draw all, as many as possible, into the outward visible Church—to hear the word, as preparatory to their ultimate admission into its full communion. Rigid and overstrained disciplinarians are prone to forget this text, "Suffer both" (the tares and the wheat) "to grow together until the harvest." There is a just and enlightened mean, which true wisdom and grace alone can teach, and which the simple-minded and humble followers of Christ, alone can learn. If all that had been aimed at, had been the removal of every obstacle to the introduction and exercise of a wholesome and sound discipline—we undertake to prove that this had been most unreservedly conceded to them. If, which we shrewdly suspect to be the truth, their secret aim, their real ambition, was to get up a Church, in which they should bear the sole and supreme sway, and in which other measures of reform, which were fondly cherished, and had been long prosecuted, with more than ordinary zeal, by some of the leading members, might ultimately be carried out, we have a key to their proceedings and recognize their perfect consistency and suitableness to the end in view. Admit this to be fact, and you have at once an explanation of the haste and abruptness with which, during Mr. Esson's absence, the work was

begun and urged forward to a decisive issue, before he could even be apprised of what was meditated.

We challenge the party arraigned, to shew, what good they could hope to gain by separation, that could, by any possibility, counter-balance the mighty evils of alienation, jealousy, embittered feeling, in fine, all the mischiefs of schism, which as it might easily have been foreseen, could not but grow out of it? It would, indeed, be difficult to conceive what improvement of congregational organization, or Church discipline and economy, could be any adequate compensation, for the reproach brought upon our cause, and the disunion created in our body, by the violation of the principles of common equity, Presbyterian order, and Christian charity. The leaders of the Free Church Committee should not have forgot, in their zeal for purity of discipline, that there is a sin called schism, and that zeal, apart from knowledge, from justice, from charity, is mischievous, and therefore more or less criminal. Have not some, at least, of the members realized in their own past history, in their own personal experience, in the various religious connections and public associations of this city, in which they have been not a little conspicuous, as leaders or prominent actors, that a good cause may be dishonoured and damaged, that peace, good will, social concord and religious unity may be sorely marred, by a blind indiscriminating zeal, in the reckless prosecution of a favorite scheme—wounding and trampling upon charity—separating between chief friends, and without furthering its own ends—bringing scandal and reproach upon the body and upon the cause. But what places beyond the possibility of doubt *or of* defence, the spirit and character of the party and its proceedings, is the fact, that when time and experience had shewn that they were extremely mistaken in all the judgments and anticipations, on which they profess to have grounded, and on which they vainly essay to vindicate their course of action; they have given not the least proof of regret or of repentance? Have they made any acknowledgement of their errors, any reparation of the wrong? It was confidently believed that when they went out of St. Gabriel Street Church, not more, at the utmost, than a dozen families would have remained clinging to the old walls and benches. And now when it is found that not only is there a numerous and growing congregation, but that a rapidly increasing Sabbath School, and a flourishing Bible Class, have all been re-organized within a very few weeks, since Mr. Esson's arrival; and, withal, what was least

expected, that a disinterested forwardness has been manifested on the part of the Elders, the Proprietors and the people, to give every aid and facility, for the establishment of a thoroughly pure constitution and effective discipline, we would just put it to the party with whom we are at issue, what sympathy have you manifested towards us? What disposition have ye, that are strong, shown to bear the burden and to help the infirmities and imperfections of those whom you *esteem weak, and perhaps unworthy brethern*? What has been your spirit and bearing since we have been making rapid progress in the work of reformation? Have ye done ought to strengthen our hands, to encourage our hearts? Have ye said, as the wounded hero, (Sir Philip Sidney) when he took the cup of cold water from his own lips to give it to his dying soldier, "Brother, thy need is greater than mine?" Have you shown a readiness of mind to share with us, what is far more precious, and ought, among Christians, to be more free than the cup of cold water, namely, the services and ministrations of the Free Church deputies, whose commissions and instructions, so palpably bear on the face of them, that they were sent out, not for a section—a fragment, but for the whole of the people in this city, that would receive and hear them? What has been alleged, we trust unwarrantably, of the sectarian selfishness, of a very respectable body of Christians, that they wished to secure to themselves, the exclusive enjoyment of the privilege of the great Whitfield's preaching, when he visited Scotland, is certainly a matter of fact in your case. You have had an inglorious triumph, in reserving to yourselves, hitherto, the exclusive possession of the deputies—and we grieve for their sakes, not less than our own, that their spirit and course have been somewhat different from that of the great evangelist, to whom we have alluded. In fine, we appeal to the whole Christian world, to rebuke us and set us right, if we are unjust or uncharitable, in proclaiming our conviction that your practice, in this case, is utterly in contradiction of your pretensions and professions, that you have followed a path, widely diverging from that of Christian wisdom, liberality and charity.

We now come to a developement of the spirit and principles of Church discipline, which have given birth to all the proceedings, of which we complain, and also, of the practical exemplification of these principles in Cote Street Church since its organization. Mr. Redpath has avowed his persuasion that it were better that the dozen families, which, it was erroneously believed, were the utmost number that

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would continue to cleave to the St. Gabriel Street Church, should be left to the hazard of perishing, than that his scheme of disciplinary reform should not be carried into complete operation. Is not this sentiment clearly embodied, and very consistently acted out in the proceedings which we have recorded? This doctrine, we hesitate not to pronounce, unscriptural, antichristian. To those who have even a rudimental knowledge of the genius and end of the Gospel dispensation, it cannot admit of doubt, that the man who was capable of forming and uttering this sentiment, has yet to learn what be the first principles of the oracles of God. If there be a truth pre-eminently clear, certain, fundamental, peculiarly characteristic of the Gospel, and lying every where upon its very surface, palpable to the dullest and most careless eye, it is, that the Gospel shall be preached to every creature, and as it offers a free full salvation to the chief of sinners, it specially and emphatically charges its Heralds, as if it were the glory of the cause, and of their Mission, to search out in the lanes and hedges of the world, the lame, the halt, the maimed, the blind. It is the indignant reproof of the Saviour himself to the Scribes and Pharisees of old. "The Publicans and Harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." We know him who hath said "they that are whole need not a Physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The more sick, the more deadly the distemper, the greater the more immediate is the need of the Skilful Physician. If Mr. R. and his friends had held sound and scriptural views of the great principles of the world's evangelization, their treatment of St. Gabriel Street Church would have been in all respects reversed. In fine to preach the Gospel to two or three perishing sinners, to say nothing of ten or twelve households, if we make Paul or Christ our model or authority, *will, must*, take precedence of sacraments—and ordinances—the most sacred and solemn—much more of all matters of external order, of ecclesiastical reform and discipline. How would it sound like a discord in the Gospel strain, to every truly christian ear & heart, to read—placed by the side of the texts which we have quoted, (and many more might have been added to the same effect), "shut them out, cast them off, take from them the preaching of the Gospel, disregard all their remonstrances and appeals in order, that my new form of discipline, of Church organization and economy, may not be hindered or marred."

It is one of the sublime and soul-animating declarations of the word of God, that the merciful Father of our spirits for the sake

of ten righteous men would spare a whole city like Sodom or Gomorrah. Contrast with this the sentiment or feeling that would rather leave in jeopardy the souls of ten or twelve households, than peril the success of a mere theory—a *devout imagination*. To save one of the least of the souls which he had made to save one sinner—Christ would have died. Mr. Redpath will not give up, no not defer the execution of a new fangled project, but inexorably persists, in order to carry it out, in withdrawing from them, and as time has shown, from more than two hundred families, the preaching of the Gospel, and the preachers who were expressly Commissioned by the Mother Church to serve them. Can we be judged severe in publishing these strictures? Our plea is, that there is an unpardonable presumption and arrogancy in the tone, language, and bearing of Mr. R. and his party, who have pushed themselves forward into the forefront of would-be reformers and luminaries of our Church, and maintain a pertinacious adherence to the false position into which they have intruded themselves.

They have no ground to complain, if we now take leave to turn the tables upon them, and apply the Gospel proverb, "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye, then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

In what circumstances, we ask, did the Cotè Street Congregation sit down to their first communion? Did they not know that, however cool and composed they might be on the occasion of that feast of love, their brethren, with whom they had been so long associated in St. Gabriel Street Church, were sorely wounded in their feelings, deeply disappointed in their just hopes and claims of ministerial service, and having been refused by those, with whom they had gone up together in company to the house of God, any participation, in the ministrations which they enjoyed, were left even without a preacher, were cast upon the tender mercies of strangers, who, like the good Samaritan in the Parable, came to their succour, when the Priest and the Levite looked on and passed by on the other side? Nor was this all the treasure of which they were despoiled, on occasion of this—to them ruinous and desolating—exodus of brethren, to whom they had entrusted all their interests with confiding simplicity. The whole staff of the Church, the Superintendent of the Sabbath School, the oldest, and with a few honorable exceptions, the best and most experienced of the Teachers, two Office-bearers, members of the Committee of Temporalities, who had acted for a long time, in the

capacity of Deacons or Elders, were all carried away, and the deserted Church, it was presumed, could never retrieve the loss or repair the ruin, which had thus suddenly overwhelmed her. Was there no room here, no call, in such a case, for the exercise of discipline? What mean these words of the Gospel and of its divine author, "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift." Was it not known in Côté Street Church, as in all the world, that Mr. Esson and his congregation had felt themselves cruelly, and as they believed, wantonly aggrieved? Had they not remonstrated indignantly, and sought to obtain redress, at the hands of the Christian brethern who had separated from them, not doubting that they would, at least, be disposed to accept the simple and most equitable concordat which they submitted to them, of dividing equally between them, the services of the deputies: an arrangement which, if they had acceded to, would have been an end of all strife? Was any thing done in the way of explanation or apology? Did they defer the solemnization of the Sacrament until some conference should be had, and some attempt at reconciliation and adjustment made? Is not charity as essential an element in Church communion, in Church discipline, as purity? Of what greater error, in point of discipline and order, could they have been guilty, than setting themselves down at the Communion Table, while they knew that the brethren whom they had just left, were suffering from wounds, still fresh and bleeding, of which they charged them with being the authors? These men, who were sorely scandalized at the erastian constitution of St. Gabriel Street Church and the state of the Eldership there, seem to have forgotten, in a far more essential point, the solemn emphasis of the charge of our Lord to His Disciples, at the time of the institution of the Sacrament of the Supper—"A new commandment give I unto you that ye love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love, one to another."

Whatever may be the reproach with which our brethern have reproached us, we believe, that on behalf of the Office-bearers and the people of St. Gabriel Street Church, we are warranted to give this testimony, that they would not, could not, have acted the part of those who have aggrieved them. Novices though they may be in the matter of Church discipline, they have such a profound sense of the importance of celebrating the feast of Christian love, in peace, good

will and Charity, with all men, regarding *this as the first, second, and third, requisite* of a pure and worthy communion, that even now they would deem it—not foreordination—to have it dispensed in this Church. They say, with all emphasis, that though they regard themselves in this case, as in no degree the offending party, they would feel, were they not to allow time for these heats to subside before its solemnization, that they were guilty of the breach of a capital point of discipline—one of the most indispensable conditions of a right administration, of a worthy receiving of the Sacrament. We will farther aver, with respect to the people of this Church, that they were utterly incapable of so far forgetting the generous and expansive charity of Christian men, *as even to have conceived the purpose* of an exclusive appropriation to themselves, of the ministrations which were given to them both in common for a time, and which were as much desired as they were needed by those who were subsequently deprived of them.

Let the Christian world decide, whose views of Christian principle and doctrine, as well as of Church communion and discipline, are most accordant with the Gospel standard. Whether we look to the theory or principles of Mr. Redpath's reform, as avowed by himself, or at their actual working, and which is still more, their manifest tendency—to pervert fundamental truth and to vitiate the Scriptural model of the economy of a Church, or look to the practical exemplification of that reform upon which we have been animadverting—it is certain that it cannot abide the test of God's word and truth.

But it may be demanded what good will this publication of our wrongs do to the parties, or which is much more to be accounted of, to the common cause. We answer much every way.

First, it will justify the innocent, the injured party, and direct the rebuke of public opinion against those individuals, in number very few, whose presumptuous ignorance, and indiscreet zeal, have bred all this perplexity and anomaly in this portion of our Church. It will go a great way to mitigate the evils, and to wipe away the reproach, which would otherwise fall upon our cause, by tracing these disorders to their real authors, to their prime source, demonstrating that they have originated with a few busy intermeddlers, acting it may be, with good intentions, but whose zeal, unregulated by knowledge or discretion, at a time when, in consequence of the disruption, the legitimate authorities of the Church were paralysed, have presumed to usurp and wield a power for which they are incompetent, and to exercise an influence, of which they are not worthy to be the depositaries.

But this case assumes a paramount importance, when we reflect upon the great principles and interests which have now become identified with it, and which will be deeply and permanently affected by the issue, by the final decision of it. The recent proceedings, in regard to this Church, have made a very general and deep impression upon the public mind, and are condemned by the great body of the Christian community.

Indeed it is impossible, for even a man of the world, having any sense of probity or honor, to glance at them without a feeling of indignation or scorn. So broad and palpable is the character of unfairness and injustice that is stamped upon the face of them.

Here we have the sorry spectacle before our eyes of the oldest Presbyterian Church in this land, after having been shattered by the first disruption, in which she had stood forth in vindication of the cause which forms the bond of our common union, rudely, unnaturally, trodden down under the feet of brethren; some of whom had been her own members and office-bearers, confidentially entrusted by the minister to watch over those interests which they were the first to lead the way in deserting, if not betraying. Such is one specimen of the moral influence and tendency of the principles which have moved and guided the late proceedings. We see her at this moment still denied the participation which she claims of the services of the Deputies, pointing in vain to the express and unequivocal evidence of their commission and instructions, which gave her even an exclusive title to the enjoyment of them. There can be no room to doubt that the character both of the mother and of the Colonial Churches, must be deeply dishonoured, if such deeds, as have been honestly and frankly detailed in this narrative, are suffered to pass without stern rebuke to the offending parties, without prompt redress to those who have been so wantonly wronged, and without effectual provision being made against the continuance or recurrence of irregularities so scandalous and destructive of all order and confidence.

Just review the history of this Church during the last three or four months. Deserted first by the Free Church deputy—repulsed by the Presbytery, her natural, her constitutional guardian and parent, in her humble suit to be permitted to engage, for a few weeks, as the only means of preserving and perpetuating her independent existence, the services of a missionary, at her own cost, who was at the moment free and at the disposal of that reverend body—forthwith she

is reduced to the condition of an outcast, thrown off by her own proper guardians, driven to the humiliating alternative of shutting her doors, or as a pensioner, of suing to the bounty of strangers for the precarious supply of her pulpit every Sabbath.

It is true her own minister has been sent by the Synod to fulfil the arduous task of re-organizing a flock, which, in his absence, had been made a prey by those to whose special guardianship he had entrusted it ; but at this very moment he is placed in the cruelly painful situation of resisting the most pressing instances to return to his proper charge, and, while well aware of the importance of his presence, in the appointed sphere of his duties, it is impossible for him, without deserting the cause of his flock, and exposing them to the most imminent hazard, to withdraw his own services, until the Church shall have redeemed her pledge to make an effectual provision for the vacancy. It is owing to his disobedience of the almost authoritative calls and commands, to return to his charge, that this congregation is not now, as before the meeting of Synod, a precarious pensioner on charity and chance. We are still looking for the action of the Church in our case, and, up to this moment, we have received no assurance to give warrant to the hope, that our wrongs have called forth due sympathy, or that there is a security, on which we may depend, that they will be ultimately redressed. While we are left in this state of insecurity and precarious dependance upon chance services, as if it were the concerted plan and purpose of the Church to complete the work of our ruin, the services of the Free Church Deputies wrongfully withdrawn, continue to be as wrongfully withheld. It may easily be conceived how much our feelings are wounded and embittered every day, in this unchecked, unrebuked triumph of injustice, while not a finger of the Church has as yet been put forth to vindicate our rights, and her own dignity and supreme authority. "Grant me justice, or cease to be king !" was the appeal of the high-spirited Greek, who sued to Philip of Macedon for his royal protection. We would fondly hope that through ignorance or misrepresentation, the rulers and authorities of the Church have not as yet been enabled to form an estimate of the importance and urgency of our case. Now that we have given forth this appeal, we look forward with much solicitude for the final decision of the question, and we will not allow ourselves to believe that we shall continue to be treated with cold neglect, or still to struggle unpitied, unsupported, against all manner of discouragement and opposition ; on the one hand called to contend against

our brethren of the establishment, in defence of our temporal rights and property, and on the other for our very existence as an independent Church, against those who ought to have been one with us, our first and best friends, our fellow-helpers, while hitherto we have invoked in vain the sympathy and succour of our ecclesiastical rulers, which in the extreme urgency of the case ought not to have been delayed a single day.

This Church puts forward no other claim than that which has been approved and sustained by the decision of the Presbytery, that she, the elder sister, be favoured with an equal measure of protection and provision with the younger. There is no other ground of opposition to this claim than the selfish ambition of the party, whose is the head and front of this offending, to establish and build up their new Church with a heartless, reckless, and most unchristian disregard of the spiritual welfare of the brethren whose souls are surely not less precious in the sight of God than theirs. We warn the Church authorities that if, for the sake of peace and of evading difficulties, they shrink in this instance from a vigorous interposition of their judicial power, they will give a preponderancy to a party, whose influence we have reason to fear will be found to stand in the way of peace and unity, and may seriously detract from the character, and thereby arrest the progress and enlargement of our Church. Be assured that the extinction of St. Gabriel Street Church may destroy that equilibrium on which the free and healthy working of our Church, in this quarter, depends. Let any one calmly review the treatment of this Church, contrast it with the prominent and important part which it had nobly sustained, and was in the very heart of the conflict, when friendly hands were lifted up—to strike a more decisive and deadly blow against her than her declared and open adversaries,—and then say whether this be not a clamant case, whether this is a wound that can be slightly healed. We feel assured that there is no extravagance in our opinion; that on the right settlement of these differences will depend the estimation of the Free Church, and her cause, in the minds of many of her most enlightened adherents, and of not fewer who, in other communions, have not been indifferent witnesses of the things which have been enacted here.

We may just be permitted to glance at a few topics, not less momentous, which are suggested by the review of this whole narrative, and which form, perhaps, to the ecclesiastical judicatories and to the spiritual rulers of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, not the least

interesting or important aspect in which they are to be contemplated. Is there or is there not, on the face of these proceedings, a manifestation of a spirit—of a tendency towards the most dangerous of all heresies, that of straining and doing violence to justice, pledged faith, at least understood, implied obligations, of honour and trust and fidelity in the fulfilment of offices, commissions, instructions? And is an appearance of this nature to be slightly thought of or regarded without dismay? Is there no danger in the tendency which, we think, has been manifested to separate religion from justice and order? Has there not been a procedure which embodies in itself the most anti-Christian of all heresies, sacrificing to the letter of outward form, the very end and scope of the Gospel, that of calling sinners to repentance? Is there not something like the monster of a Presbyterian Puseyism growing into palpable form and exhibiting its first vital movements? Should our Church do generally what has been done in this city, desert and cast off, not ten or a dozen families, but two hundred and upwards, in order to give a perfect finish, an exquisite perfection to discipline, and to form Churches of the purest, best elements, extracted and elaborated out of the promiscuous mass of professing Christians; say would this be a less malignant, pernicious or fatal form of the heresy in question than we find exhibited by the Church of England at this day. We humbly conceive that this latter would be found, essentially, *in its spirit* more unscriptural and anti-Christian, than the former, and *in its fruits and effects*, far more desolating and destructive of religion. Are these incipient appearances, these first buddings of error, heresy, corruption, affecting the very vitals, nay, subverting the very end of the Gospel Church to be passed over without rebuke? Is there not a call upon the Church to put forth a vigorous arm to restrain and arrest them? Is the Free Church, at home or abroad, in no danger of being carried away at some point or in some direction from the golden mean of truth and soberness, and of lapsing into some extravagances, or verging towards an extreme, in the prosecution of those reforms, which, in a due degree, are wise and salutary, but which a new born and effervescent zeal may push with intemperate eagerness?

How much is there then, both affecting the internal purity of faith, doctrine and principle, within the Church, as well as the outward and orderly administration of her affairs, that presses upon the ecclesiastical powers, the prompt and decisive settlement of this most important case, and the immediate adoption of such wise precautions and pro-

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visions as may prevent the recurrence of events, like the present— which inflict a deep wound upon the character, which arrest the progress and prosperous advancement of our Church, and give a colour of plausibility to the worst calumnies and misrepresentations of our enemies.

Contenting ourselves with merely suggesting the important principles and interests which are involved in this case, and will be deeply affected by the issue, whether for good or evil, we now commit our cause to the judgment of those who preside over the Church in this land and in the mother country, with the fervent prayer that they may be enlightened and guided by the wisdom from above, to discern what is right and equal, and may be strengthened to execute and enforce it.

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APPENDIX.

[A]

Resolutions passed at a General Meeting of the Congregation of St. Gabriel Street Church, on the 8th August, 1845.

1. *Resolved*,—That it is necessary, for the vindication of the character and rights of this Congregation, and especially in justification of the conduct of the office bearers in the session, and the temporal Committee in the recent proceedings, that the statement which has now been read, with all the necessary documentary evidence, be forthwith published and transmitted to the Colonial Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, and to the Commission of the Presbyterian Church of Canada and the following gentlemen, Messrs. Ferrie, Murray and Archibald M'Farlane, be appointed a Committee to draw up a memorial to accompany the said statement.

2. *Resolved*,—That the thanks of this meeting be given from the chair to the Temporal Committee, and to the Elders, for the united moderation and firmness which they manifested in their intercourse with the Free Church Committee; and for the spirit, ability and decision, with which, in all the proceedings and negotiations that have recently taken place, they have asserted the rights and defended the interests of the Church.

3. *Resolved*,—That in as much as the proprietors have generously declared their intention to restore the original constitution of the Church, as it stood in 1792, and from that date down to 1804, they are entitled to the heartfelt thanks of this congregation, for their disinterested sacrifice; and this congregation, therefore, are called upon by every obligation of interest and gratitude, to sustain them and the authorities of the Church in the prosecution of the rights, and in securing possession of the property belonging thereto; and that especially it is of immediate and urgent necessity, that the revenues of the Church be placed on an efficient footing, by the prompt and faithful payment of the seat rents.

August 8th, 1845.

[B]

Mr. Esson's Commission from the Synod.

At Cobourg the tenth day of June, one thousand eight hundred and forty-five, which day the Synod of the Presbyterian Church met, and was constituted (inter alia.)

The Synod took up the reference for advice from the Presbytery of Montreal respecting St. Gabriel's Street Church, in said city, and having considered the same unanimously, *Resolved, 1st*—That said Presbytery be recommended to receive the resignation of Mr. Henry Esson, as Minister of the Church aforesaid, on the ground of his permanent appointment to the office of Professor of Literature and Philosophy, in the Synod's Theological College, Toronto.

2nd—That Mr. Esson be appointed to visit the St. Gabriel Street Congregation, and assist them in revising the Constitution and Deeds of their Church, that the same, in all that relates to spiritual things, may be brought into harmony with the standards and the practice of this Church.

3rd—That these instruments, when so revised, shall be, by Mr. Esson or any office-bearer of the Church, laid before the Presbytery of the bounds; who, on being satisfied with the same, shall direct the Congregation to take the requisite steps for procuring a successor to Mr. Esson, and shall also, with the assistance of the Home Missionary Committee, if necessary, make arrangements for supplying the Pulpit during the vacancy.

Extracted from the records of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church by

WM. RINTOUL, *Synod Clerk.*

[C]

Mr. Esson's Letter to the Presbytery.

MONTREAL, NOV. 9, 1844.

TO THE REVEREND THE PRESBYTERY OF MONTREAL.—I beg leave to state to the Presbytery that having been appointed by the Synod at its late meeting to superintend the Literary and Philosophical studies of the students of Theology, in connection with the Presbyterian Church of Canada; and the Synod having undertaken to make provision for the pastoral work of the congregation of St. Gabriel Street Church, it is my intention in a few days, God willing, to set out for Toronto, which is appointed ad interim, to be the seat of the Theological School. As I am desirous to afford every immediate facility for the early appointment of a minister to fill my place, I desire it to be understood that I only defer giving in my resignation of the pastoral charge in due form, until permanent arrangements are completed, and especially until such steps have been taken as may be necessary to secure the temporal property of the Church. I feel it my duty to recommend to the watchful guardianship of the Presbytery, the interests of this Congregation in this critical emergency of the Church, and the hostile influences to which they are exposed, at a time when they are disorganised and unsettled in consequence of the disruption. I pray that the Presbytery may be guided in this important affair, and in all the

work committed to them by God in the wide sphere of their Ecclesiastical rule by the wisdom from above,

(Signed)

H. Esson.

[D]

Mr. Esson's Correspondence with Mr. Murray prior to the Meeting of Synod.

Toronto, 1st May, 1845.

MY DEAR MURRAY,—Your letter of 21st ult. has given me extreme pain. I forbear from making any remarks at present upon the proceedings of the Free Church Committee, as they will probably come under the view of the Synod at its first meeting in June next. All that I can say is just this, that if the congregation adhering to St. Gabriel Street Church, are determined to have a minister for themselves in my stead, *they will, they must* be protected by the Synod. But let me repeat, after what I stated in my last discourse from that Pulpit, (and when I read what I then very clearly and fully stated to you all, it seems as if it had been written with a foreknowledge of your present difficulties,) it surely cannot be unreasonable on my part to expect that Elders, Committee and Proprietors, will all unite to sanction and carry out in practice, the great principles for which we have been contending, and to which we have, in the most public and solemn manner, pledged ourselves.* The constitution of the Church is absurd—it is not only grossly Erastian but it is almost unchristian, for a Heathen might be a proprietor or elector if you retain that constitution. This, I believe, was a subject of discussion at a meeting of proprietors called at my instance, for the purpose of obtaining their consent to an entire repeal of the old regulations and to the adoption of a new order—consistent with Presbyterian, not to Free Church principles. I conceived that all this was understood and unanimously and cordially agreed to. There must be an entire abandonment of the old constitution, otherwise your Church is more Erastian than that from which you have separated and against which you have protested.† If you insist on retaining this, you contradict yourselves, and no possibility would be left of defending your proceedings or of recognizing you as a part of the Synod of Canada. You will anticipate my judgment, from what I have said above, with respect to the Session, of which I believe that Mr. Leslie and Mr.

* An extract from this sermon accompanied this letter.

† In their correspondence with Mr. Esson, it was confidently stated by some members of the Free Church Committee, that the Proprietors and Authorities of St. Gabriel Street Church, had, in violation of their pledged faith, resisted the proposal of a thorough reform of the old constitution. Certain it is that they had succeeded in persuading Mr. Bonar, that there was no hope of obtaining their ultimate consent to an effectual amendment thereof. How utterly unwarrantable this ungenerous imputation was, will appear in the course of this narrative, as it has been triumphantly disproved by the event.

Johnson are the only Elders who have not professedly retired. I have written with all frankness to the former, what appears to me to be the manly and honorable course; and I would fain hope that they will be both ready to follow that course which it seems clear to me, principle and consistency demand, namely—either to engage to fulfil the spiritual duties of the office, or, if they be not prepared to do this, to seek the practical application and operation of our principles, by opening the door, as far as in them lies, to the formation of a session, in accordance with the good old Scriptural model of our Church. I am well persuaded, that in acting this part, they will do honor to themselves and their cause; and with the happiness of being the instruments of restoring peace and unity to a distracted Church, they will be amply recompensed for the sacrifice of an office, which it can be neither pleasant nor lawful to retain without fulfilling its main end—its proper and sacred functions. I think there is nothing so manly and becoming, as to make sacrifices to principle, and nothing but a false pride and false honor could prompt a contrary course. I know not what plea could be urged, in defence of any Church or congregation, which should sanction a violation of a fundamental and most wise and salutary law, in respect to the most important office-bearers in the Church, next to the minister; nor do I conceive it at all probable that either the Church at home or in Canada, will ever lend their sanction to what would be a most palpable and gross contradiction of our vital principles. If there are, as you state, men who would act the part of traitors, and give up the Church to Dr. Mathieson and Dr. Black, because, forsooth, they cannot have their *own will or way*, they are not the men whom we could afford to satisfy by honest and honorable concessions; they are *not true men*, and their defection will not be found to diminish the real strength of the Church but rather the contrary. There is but one safe, wise, and honorable course, it is that of an unflinching adherence to our principles. Oh, that God would give you all a spirit of peace and unity, and would lead you to seek with a single eye to the glory of God and the spiritual welfare of the congregation, of yourselves and families—such an arrangement as will unite you all in one fold, under one pastor, making all “one body and one spirit in the Lord.” A great blessing will be theirs who act the part of mediators and peace makers.

Seek to build up your Church, in its new organization, on sound Scriptural principles, and then you will prosper; because in this way only can you expect the Divine blessing. Do, my dear sir, exert all your influence for this end. Let division cease. Labour to obtain an immediate and perfect union of all the friends of our cause in your city, under the ministrations of Mr. Bonar; and if sacrifices be necessary, of some little rights or some office or influence, it will receive a manifold recompence in the blessed result of your union, under a faithful Gospel ministry. I could not, consistently with my conviction of what was due to the Church, have continued as your pastor—that was my main inducement in accepting the office I now

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hold. My Elders and people will not blame me for advising them to follow my example in this respect. I cannot too deeply impress upon you my sense of your responsibility in this case, to God and to the Church. Do what is right, and then, in some way or other, you will find a provision. As far as I have any influence or ability to serve you, consistently with the views now stated, I shall not be wanting. May God direct and bless you all. With kindest regards to Mrs. M. and family,

Your's ever,

H. ESSON.

[E]

Toronto, May 14, 1845.

MY DEAR MURRAY,—I am still in a state of almost absolute ignorance of what is devised or doing, or done in regard to the settlement of the unhappy differences which have divided so unseasonably the friends of the Free Church cause in Montreal. I am not willing to leave anything undone which may tend to effect a re-union, or, if that be impracticable, it may still be possible to make provision for the establishment of two congregations on an independent and equal basis, and I am not without hope, that this, in the end, might prove best for the two parties, and for the common cause to which both are attached. I pressed upon you in my former letter to employ all your influence and energy for the indispensable preparatory work of remodelling the Constitution of the Church, and of placing all things in such working order, that there may be nothing to stand in the way of your just and paramount claim upon the fullest protection which the Synod or the Parent Church in Scotland are enabled to extend to you. If this be done, I shall plead your cause and use all my persuasion, and I confidently hope with success, to have you immediately provided with an able and efficient Pastor. There are two things which strike me as of peculiar importance in order to bring your claims with the greatest weight before the Synod. Let it be manifest that you have just and solid grounds for upholding the Church and Congregation of St. Gabriel Street, and that it is not merely a small party or faction, actuated by a selfish and worldly spirit, and caring little for the principles of our cause, that are holding out in opposition to the great body of its true and faithful adherents. In the next place, it is all important that you leave not one relique of the Erastian Constitution of your Church, or any thing unsound or un-presbyterial in its actual order or working, to be made a handle against you. If you are able to effect this and can exhibit to the Synod, even such a number of adherents as may form the nucleus of a congregation, I am inclined to believe that it may be wise and expedient to sustain both the churches, and certainly I feel that the old Church must not experience less favour and support than the new. If I am favoured with the intelligence that these conditions are accepted, I would next direct my endeavours to the object of obtain-

ing you an equal participation of all the ministrations and advantages which may be at present enjoyed by the other section. I should not be doing my part as a Christian man, much less as a Christian Minister if I did not urge upon you to seek peace by all means and to overcome evil with good. I would have preferred unity if it could have been attained without great sacrifice, and I would beseech and conjure you to do all that in you lies to pour oil on the troubled waters. I have much confidence in my brethren Mr. Henry and Mr. Clugston that they will do what is right and equal to all parties. "Ye are Brethren see that ye fall not out by the way," said Joseph to the Patriarchs.

(Signed,)

H. ESSON.

[F]

Letter to Mr. Leslie.

Toronto, April 22, 1845.

MY DEAR SIR,—Having learned with deep regret that there has arisen an unhappy division in the congregation of St. Gabriel Street Church, of which the effect I fear may be to discredit and depress the cause of the Free Church, and to hinder or narrow the usefulness of Mr. Bonar in his ministrations in Montreal, I need not offer any apology for addressing you now, in the hope that my mediation may, by the blessing of God, restore unity. In the absence of any definite information, I am led to conjecture that you have probably felt yourself called upon to resist the stipulation of an entire reorganization of the congregation, both in the secular and spiritual department, which the Free Church Committee would, no doubt, require, as an indispensable condition, to form the basis of union. On this subject I will therefore beg leave to declare my sentiments, as they were maturely formed, even prior to the disruption, and as they have determined my own course of action in this extraordinary crisis of our Church. I had long been contemplating a reformation of the temporal constitution of the Church, which is altogether absurd and unpresbyterial, if I might not say unchristian, for a Jew or a Mahommedan, according to its provisions, might be a manager or a proprietor, and have a voice in the election of the Pastor. I expounded my views on this point, at a general meeting of proprietors, held a short time before my departure, at which it was unanimously agreed, that the constitution should be new modelled and brought, in all respects, into a perfect conformity with Presbyterian principles. Indeed, the fact of having declared our adherence to the Synod of Canada and its cause, involves, virtually, the solemn pledge of using every means in our power to effect a complete reformation of a constitution so absurd and vicious. For the same reason, I conceive that the obligation is equally imposed upon us, of uniting our efforts to have our Sessions constituted on a Presbyterian, or in other words, Scriptural basis. In fact, I regarded our Session as having died a natural death. You and Mr. Gunn

had retired from taking an active part. We were constrained to call in other members of the Church to discharge the duties of the Session. Mr. Johnston alone remained at his post. Even to him I should have, unhesitatingly, tendered my friendly and faithful counsel, and enforced it by all my powers of persuasion, that if he did not mean to undertake the fulfilment of those *spiritual functions* of the Eldership, which are the main end of the office, it would be a manly and noble tribute to the cause, to resign an office, to hold which could serve no end of honor or of interest, while it was clearly a high duty to remove every obstacle out of the way of having a Session re-constructed on the strict basis of Presbyterian order and purity. Indeed I frankly own, that I had early come to the resolution of endeavoring myself to exchange my position for one in which I would be more useful, and for which I was conscious of being better qualified than for the pastoral duties of a Church, in a great metropolis like Montreal. I persuade myself that my Elders will not take offence at my recommending to them to follow the course which I had traced out for myself. In conclusion, I may safely commit it to your sound judgment and honorable sentiments, to determine what course ought to be taken by all of us, in order to serve the great common cause for which we are responsible to God. The great object to be aimed at, is to unite all the adherents and friends of the cause, under Mr. Bonar, on principles that are soundly and consistently Presbyterian, and to secure, if possible, the Church of St. Gabriel Street and all the temporalities to the united congregation, to be disposed and governed in accordance with the laws of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, and under its jurisdiction. I have begun a correspondence with Mr. Bonar and Mr. Henry, of La Chute, who will, I doubt not, co-operate with you and other friends of our Church, in effecting, by the Divine blessing, an early and permanent adjustment of all existing differences.

(Signed,)

H. ESSON.

[G]

MR. ARNOT'S COMMISSION.

Letter from Rev. Wm. Rintoul to Rev. H. Esson.

MY DEAR SIR,—I had a few lines from Mr. Gale on Saturday requesting me to send you Mr. Arnot's Commission from the Colonial Committee, or an extract from it, in which the views of the Committee towards Montreal are expressed.

In Mr. Arnot's Commission dated 28th April, 1845. Mr. Arnot is commissioned, (inter alia) "And particularly by his Ministrations at Montreal, to foster and encourage the exertions that are being made to consolidate the Congregation there in connection with the Presbyterian Synod of Canada."

[H]

Petition of the undersigned members of Session and of the Committee of Temporalities of St. Gabriel Street Church to the Reverend the Presbytery of Montreal.

HUMBLY SHEWETH,—That your Petitioners, on behalf of themselves and of the Congregation, of which they are the Office-bearers, desire to represent, that they feel themselves deeply aggrieved by the unexpected and, as it seems, unaccountable withdrawal from them of the ministrations of the Free Church Deputies, and respectfully to solicit your Reverend Body to interpose the weight of your authority to vindicate the equal rights of your Petitioners and those whom they represent, to a full participation of all the advantages now exclusively engrossed by the Cotè Street Congregation. It appears, from very authentic and authoritative documents which have come under the view of your Petitioners, that the services now confined to the younger flock, which, before the arrival of the Free Church deputies, had no existence—were originally intended to supply the vacancy caused by Mr. Esson's removal to Toronto. We refer to the *Missionary Record* of March, 1845, and the *Witness* newspaper of 31st May last, in which we find Dr. Candlish, in giving in the report of the Colonial Committee, stating, with regard to Canada, that "Mr. Esson, formerly of Montreal, having been appointed to attend to the preliminary studies of the students has left Montreal, and to fill up the vacancy, the Committee have endeavoured to obtain the labours of ministers from this country. Accordingly Mr. Bonar, of Larbert, was appointed to go to Montreal, and at the same time to assist in carrying on the work throughout other parts of Canada. He has been for some time employed on that errand, and when he returns, his place will be supplied by another brother who has sailed from this country, the Rev. Mr. Arnot, of Glasgow." It is impossible to believe that any deputy of the Free Church could have been warranted, much less commissioned, to reserve, for a non-existing congregation, what was to be withheld from an old and established one, who had alone fought the battle of the Free Church in this city, and whose pastor had just been removed to fill a more public situation.*

Your Petitioners would further humbly and earnestly represent the necessity of this Presbytery's making application for one of the ablest and most effective missionaries at the disposal of the Home Mission. And they beg to name Mr. Leishman, to be stationed in Montreal for a period of six months, to co-operate with the Free Church deputy, in serving equally the two sister congregations. If consistent with the rules of the Church, it would be exceedingly desirable that he should be ordained, that he might be duly quali-

* These views of the Petitioners were subsequently confirmed when Mr. Esson obtained from the Clerk of the Synod an extract from Mr. Arnot's commission, which will be found in this appendix. (See G)

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fied to perform, legally, all the acts of baptism, marriage, and burial. This is of great importance, in giving stability and satisfaction to the flock, and to re-establish their confidence in the new order of things, after all the disappointments, fluctuations, and disruptions which they have so recently experienced.

Your Petitioners submit their case to the wisdom of your Reverend Court, in full assurance that you will afford them the redress for which they plead, of most unmerited and, as it well nigh proved, fatal wrongs, inflicted upon them at a time when they had a right to look for very different treatment.

J. LESLIE.
GEO. JOHNSTON.
J. MACFARLANE.
WM. MURRAY.
DAVID HANDYSIDE.
ADAM FERRIE.
JAMES TURNER.

[I]

Toronto, May 3, 1845.

MY DEAR SIR,—I hereby declare that it is my desire, as soon as the Presbytery of Montreal feel it expedient, to be released from the Pastoral charge of the congregation of St. Gabriel Street Church, as I have been appointed by the Synod to fill the office of Professor of Literature and Philosophy in the Theological Institute in this city, and had no other end in deferring to give in my resignation to the Presbytery than to serve the interests of the Church by securing the possession of the temporalities until a successor should be appointed in my room. So soon as I can be released from the charge, consistently with the interests of the Congregation and the ends of Presbyterian order, I respectfully crave that you will do so and advise me,

I am, dear Sir,

Your's affectionately,

H. ESSON.

The Rev. Thomas Henry, }
Moderator of Presbytery }
of Montreal.

[K]

Extract of the Minutes of Presbytery.

At Montreal, this tenth day of July, one thousand eight hundred and forty-five years, the Presbytery of Montreal, in connection with the Presbyterian Church of Canada, held a *pro re nata* meeting to take into consideration the state of the St. Gabriel Street Congregation, within said Church, and was constituted.

Mr. Esson, in laying his commission upon the table, with the view of settling the differences between the two congregations of the Free Church Côté Street and St. Gabriel Street Church, submitted a proposal that the Presbytery should at once decide that the services of the Free Church deputy, and the Missionaries of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, should be equally apportioned, so as to prevent jealousies; to which Mr. Redpath having objected.

Mr. Esson then submitted to the Presbytery the amended Constitution of St. Gabriel Street Church, which after mature consideration was approved. Mr. Arnot, Minister, and Mr. Redpath, Elder, both declined to express any opinion on the subject.

Mr. Esson then submitted a Petition in behalf of the St. Gabriel Street Church congregation, craving an equal participation of whatever services and benefits are provided by the Parent and Colonial churches, so long as their adherents in Montreal are dependent upon them for supply of preaching and Gospel ordinances. Mr. Esson was heard at length in support of his views, to which Mr. Redpath elder, objected. The farther discussion of the subject was adjourned till to-morrow at eight o'clock, and this sederunt was closed with prayer.

The matter of St. Gabriel Street Church was again taken up by the Presbytery, and after mature consideration, the following motions were made and seconded.

First Motion,—"The Presbytery having solemnly and deliberately considered the case of St. Gabriel Street Church as brought before them by the Rev. Mr. Esson, are of opinion that it will be in all respects most conducive to the glory of God and the general good of the population attached to our communion in this great metropolis, and most likely by the blessing of God to allay the heats and animosities that may have been occasioned by recent events, that these two congregations be maintained on their present independent basis—that they be regarded by the Presbytery as entitled to an equal share of the pastoral superintendence and ministerial services which the Church can command. The Presbytery do most earnestly recommend to all parties concerned to cultivate a spirit of brotherly love and Christian charity, so that pure and vital godliness may not be injured by unseemly dissensions, and that the work of Christ may be greatly promoted in this land. In the present difficulties the Presbytery earnestly crave the advice of the commission in reference to St. Gabriel Street Church, and the immediate supply of ministerial service to that congregation."

Second Motion,—"Moved, That the Presbytery considering all the circumstances of this case, considering that already Mr. Bonar the former deputy from the Free Church has formed the Congregation of Côté Street with the sanction of this Presbytery, and that Mr. Arnot since he arrived in the country, has ministered in that Church, and expresses his conviction that his services for the few weeks he will be in the country, will be more effective for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, if he is allowed to continue in the same sphere in which he has begun to labour. Considering also the present state of the Congregation of St. Gabriel Street, seeing the minister, Mr. Esson is about to leave, and all the elders about to resign, the Presbytery make immediate application to the Home Mission Committee to send an ordained Minister to supply the vacancy there, and for the future refer for advice to the next meeting of the commission."

It was agreed that the state of the vote should be 1st or 2nd motion, the first being Mr. Henry's, the second Mr. Arnot's. The vote having been taken, the following gentlemen voted for Mr. Henry's motion, viz., Mr. Henry, Mr. Esson, ministers, Mr. Leslie, elder, 3; for Mr. Arnot's, viz., Mr. Arnot, minister, Mr. Redpath, elder, 2. The first motion was accordingly carried, when Mr. Arnot appealed to the Synod for reasons to be given in and craved extracts, to which appeal Mr. Redpath adhered, and the sederunt was closed with prayer.

Extracted from the Minutes of Presbytery this thirteenth day of July one thousand eight hundred and forty-five years,

By

DAVID BLACK, Presbytery Clerk.

[L.]

Narrative of the Correspondence between the two Committees from the Memorial to the Synod.

After Mr. Bonar had preached for several weeks to a very numerous congregation, one of the Free Church Committees called upon a member of the Temporal Committee of the Church, and stated, that as Mr. Bonar was desirous of reorganizing the congregation, it would be necessary to call a meeting of the proprietors. To this request, it was answered, that it would be necessary, in the first place, to have a meeting of the Committee; and at the same time, the desire was expressed, that whatever changes were deemed necessary, they might be effected in as gentle a manner as possible, so as not to create any more bitter feeling, as too much of that had been already caused on account of the disruption,—and it was recommended that five or six new Elders might be appointed in addition to the two or three old ones.

This apparently reasonable advice did not appear to give satisfaction. The same gentleman called next day, and stated that *they*, meaning the Free Church Committee, had that day determined to build a church, and that they would now only require the use of St. Gabriel Street Church for a part of the Sunday, until a new one was erected; and that, if they did not get that accommodation, they would have to go elsewhere, and take their Minister with them.

A meeting of the Temporal Committee was held, and a deputation from the Free Church Committee appeared and made the above proposal. Considerable surprise was felt and expressed, when it was understood for the first time, that the "Free Church Committee" claimed the Rev. Mr. Bonar as their Minister—he having been sent out, as they stated, in consequence of a call sent home by them. However, as it was understood and desired by the Committee of St. Gabriel Street Church, that both bodies would worship together, until the new church was erected, no umbrage was taken at this conduct of the Committee; and they must admit that their proposal of having the use of the church for a part of the day, was met in the most liberal and generous spirit. The Temporal Committee agreeing to give them the use of the church every day of the week if necessary, only reserving the Sunday forenoon, with the understanding that both parties would meet as usual, and Mr. Bonar officiate; and they were further offered the entire use of the church during any sacramental occasion.

The Temporal Committee considered it their duty previous to confirming this offer, to call a meeting of the proprietors, which was accordingly done, and the offer was approved by the meeting, with the exception of two gentlemen, who are opposed to the Free Church cause.

Another meeting of the Temporal Committee and the deputation from the Free Church Committee took place, when the latter stated, that upon consideration, they found that the use of the church for a part of the day would not answer

their purpose—that they would require it for the whole day—that the Precentor, the Band, and the Door-keeper, should be under their controul—that they were to have all the collections, &c.

This extraordinary proposal it was thought proper to leave to the determination of the members of Session. Accordingly, a meeting of the Session, the Temporal Committee, and the deputation from the Free Church Committee, was held within the church on the 1st of April last, when the chairman of the Free Church Committee renewed the proposal, and handed in the form of a Resolution, which they had previously prepared for the Temporal Committee of the Church—the following is a copy of the same:—

“That as there is at present no minister to officiate in St. Gabriel Street Church, belonging to the congregation, the Rev. Mr. Esson being absent in Toronto, the Temporal Committee, in virtue of the authority vested in them by the meeting of proprietors, held in St. Gabriel Street Church on Wednesday evening the 26th instant, when it was resolved that the Temporal Committee proceed to confer with the sub-Committee from the Association, for forming a new congregation under the Rev. Mr. Bonar; and after due deliberation, it was unanimously resolved and agreed to, that the Association in behalf of the new congregation, shall have the lease of the church, for a small consideration, for the purpose of forming themselves into a new congregation, while their own church is erecting, or until it is again required by the proprietors and congregation of St. Gabriel Street Church for their own use—it being clearly understood, that the Temporal Committee shall have the right of resuming the possession of the church whenever they may see fit to do so, by giving the new congregation or their representatives, two months' notice to quit, in order to give time for them to look out for accommodations for worshipping elsewhere, unless it should be required for the Rev Mr. Esson, in which case they will have the right of taking immediate possession, by giving two weeks' notice. The new congregation to have the entire use of the church during their occupancy, the Precentor and Band, (should such be required) as well as the Door-keeper, to be under their controul, all the seats to remain as they now are, in the hands of the present occupants, and all the revenues derived therefrom, to belong to and be collected by the Temporal Committee of the St. Gabriel Street Church, and in consequence of the benefits derived from having the Sabbath services done by the Rev. Mr. Bonar or such other Minister as may be officiating for the new congregation, during the term of their occupancy, the Temporal Committee agree to give the representatives of the new congregation a sum equal to that paid by them for the services of the Precentor or Band, (if required) also the Door-keeper's salary, and the heating of the church, out of the said pew rents—the remaining sum to be entirely at their own disposal. The new congregation to have all the collections made in the church, during their occupancy, for Missionary or other purposes. This agreement is entered into with the full conviction that both parties will derive advantages, therefrom, and being entirely voluntary, each party will have an equal right of cancelling, or discounting this agreement whenever they think fit. But no party will have any right to alter its conditions while it is allowed to continue, and while it is the bounden duty of all parties to pray for that harmony and good will, which now prevails and that the blessing of God may rest upon all the church services which may then be offered up in honour of His great name.”

P.S.—The occupancy to begin on Sabbath the 6th of April next, and that the nominal rent or consideration for the Church be 5s. per month—at the rate of £3 per Annum.

The reading of this proposed resolution, created very great surprise, and one member of the Temporal Committee could not help observing, that it was one of the most one sided proposals he had ever heard of, which was the strongest remark made. The proposal was of course resisted, for had the Temporal Committee acceded to it, they would have been unfaithful to the trust reposed in them, by the Proprietors and Congregation in general, would only have been permitted to sit within their own Church, by the sufferance of a few strangers.

Although the Committee of the St. Gabriel Street Church, could not agree to

give up the entire use of the Church, for the purpose of forming a new Congregation, they nevertheless repeated the offer of the use of the Church, merely reserving as before stated, the forenoon of Sunday, and the desire was expressed, that both parties would meet together like brethren until the new Church was built, when they would part in peace, without disturbing the harmony and good will which had hitherto prevailed.

In reply to the Secretary's note enclosing the resolution making offer of the use of the Church for a part of the Sabbath, the following answer was returned.

Letter to J. McFarlane, Esq., from Mr. Redpath.

MONTREAL, 5th April, 1845.

DEAR SIR,

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your communication of the 2nd inst, enclosing the following resolution of the Temporal Committee of the St. Gabriel Street Church, viz.: "The Committee unanimously resolved that the use of the St. Gabriel Street Church be given to the Committee of the Free Church, with the exception of the forenoon service, which the Congregation will retain, with the understanding that the Rev. Mr. Bonar will officiate during the absence of the Rev. Mr. Esson."

The resolution was laid before the General Committee, for the formation of a new Congregation, in connexion with the Synod of the Presbytery of Canada. On making our first application for the use of the Church, our impressions then were, that half of the day might probably suit our purpose; but upon further and more deliberate reflection, we see many serious objections to this plan, and therefore beg leave most respectfully to decline the present offer, for the following reasons, which, in our opinion are almost equally conclusive against the acceptance of either this offer, or the proposal made by us and agreed to by your Committee conditionally, (that the member of Session who was absent, concurred,) viz.: that we should have the temporary use of the building for the whole of the day, while you were without supply of your own, we giving up the Church, whenever required by your Committee.

1st. We feel that it would be impossible to form our Congregation within the walls of St. Gabriel Street Church (more especially after the animadversions made upon our proposition by some of your Members at the last meeting in the Church,) without exposing ourselves to the serious imputation of having injured the interests of the Congregation by taking away some of its Members in the event of any of them joining us, and that too, at the very time when we were receiving accommodations at their hands, during the absence of their own Minister.

2nd. We cannot conceal from ourselves the fact, that whatever temporary disadvantages may result to either party from our present removal, it is quite obvious that the evils will be greatly increased by delaying that removal to any future period.

3rd. With regard to the New Congregation, we have always felt that in some respects there would be many difficulties in forming it within the walls of St. Gabriel Street Church, and subsequent events have clearly shown that these would be greater than we even at first anticipated, besides which, the very fact that the Committee have it not in their power to give us any certainty of the time of occupancy, but leave us liable to be removed at a time when it may be extremely inconvenient for us to procure another place of worship, would of itself be sufficient ground for declining the offer.

We have hitherto worshipped in St. Gabriel Street Church, not so much for the purpose of sharing in the accommodation which the building afforded, as for the purpose of allowing the Members of the Church to share in the benefits of the supply which we had obtained; we were willing to make a sacrifice that this might be continued for the sake of the Congregation, and regret only on that account that our plan was not agreed to, and now we can only say, that during the absence of their Minister, should we obtain a suitable place of worship, we shall be most happy to accommodate them to the very utmost extent of our means.

In conclusion we beg to assure the Temporal Committee of St. Gabriel Street Church of our most earnest desire, to have continued meeting in the same place of worship, were it not for the above (as we think) valid reasons with many others which it is needless here to specify.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

(Signed)

JOHN REDPATH.

After the Committee received the above letter, all communication betwixt the two parties ceased, the Free Church Committee commenced erecting a wooden building, as a temporary place of worship, which was finished in about three weeks.

[M.]

Copy of letter to Rev. J. Bonar.

This letter was in answer to a very kind and friendly letter from Mr. Bonar, in which he seemed to apprehend that Mr. E.'s views of church discipline were somewhat latitudinarian.

MONTREAL, July 30th, 1845.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 15th instant is before me, and while I thank you for the affectionate frankness, with which you have opened your mind to me, and as a faithful, and let me assure you, a well beloved Brother in the Lord, given utterance to all that was in your heart, you will permit me to add, it is impossible, that I should have received it in any other spirit, than that in which I am persuaded it has been given. In reality my dear friend, I have not, I cannot have any difference with you, in all that you have so well and correctly stated, on the importance of Church discipline. You must have utterly misapprehended my words, most certainly my meaning, if you have thereby been impressed with the apprehension, that I am disposed to give the least countenance to laxity, in a point of such vital importance to the spiritual well being of the members. That be far from me. But assuredly I do believe, that there may be an overstrained rigour, or violent and abrupt procedure in the attempted reformation of the outward order and discipline; the offspring of a zeal without knowledge; a zeal unlightened and intemperate, of which the effect may be as in the present instance, to sacrifice the end to the means, and in the eager haste to carry a measure of ecclesiastical reform, to push forward some new organization, or some new fangled scheme, to take away from perishing sinners the preaching of the gospel, or to give such offence, as will lead them who are coming in to hold back, and be the occasion of their separation from an evangelical and powerful Ministry. "Compel them to come in that my house may be filled," is the language of the Saviour and of his spirit, and surely there could have been no measure of ecclesiastical order or reform, that should not have been postponed or deferred, rather than that a numerous body of professed adherents, who waited upon your Ministry, should have been so rudely and abruptly severed and cast off. God sent not His Apostles themselves, to baptize and settle matters of external order. Nay, their chief end, their great mission is to preach the gospel to every creature, to snatch perishing sinners as brands from the burning, and to do all subordinate duties, in the order of their importance as subservient to this paramount object. I have not my dear sir, one sentiment in common with the man who led the way, and is chiefly responsible for all that now perplexes and aggrives us; that it was better that some souls should be left to perish, than that his discipline or organization, should not be carried out. It is a fearful price at which to purchase a greater and more certain reform, than this can possibly be esteemed, by any sober minded christian. Surely it would have been wiser for you to have continued to preach as you were doing with so much acceptance, and effect the gospel message, and to have been well advised in taking a new measure, least it might turn out for the hindrance and prejudice of that work, in comparison of which all other things are but as the small dust of the balance. I have had no manner of difficulty in obtaining the hearty unanimous and ready consent of my

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people to all the conditions, and much more than all that was required of them, for the reform of the Church, both in temporals and spirituals.

By next packet I hope to be able to transmit to the Committee and to yourself such an exposition of my views and proceedings as will I humbly think set me right with you and all who love the cause of truth and righteousness, and all who love the purity, the peace, and prosperity of our Beloved Zion. And as nothing has grieved me more and almost shaken my confidence in my own strong and clear conviction of duty than the fact of my being led to form conclusions so far asunder from those of yourself and Mr. Arnot, so nothing believe me will give me greater pleasure than to be brought back again into harmony with you both, whether it be by the discovery of my own errors and misjudgments which is the more probable, or by your candid acquiescence in what I may be able to demonstrate of the rectitude of my present views and principles. I feel that in the right adjustment of the present difficulties, the character, influence, and principles of the Free Church are deeply involved. May God in mercy grant us a happy deliverance,

I am, my Dear Sir,

H. ESSON.

(Signed)

[N.]

Mr. Arnot's Commission and Letter to Him from Mr. Esson.

Montreal, July 26, 1845.

MY DEAR SIR,—In a letter from my friend Mr. Rintoul, Clerk of the Synod of our Church. I have received an extract from your Commission to the Synod in the following terms:—"Mr. Arnot is Commissioned (inter alia) and particularly by his ministrations at Montreal, to foster and encourage the exertions that are being made to consolidate the Congregation there in connection with the Presbyterian Synod of Canada." As the date of your Commission is 28th of April, 1845, it can no longer admit of the least question that your Commission gives us even an exclusive right to your undivided services, which, God forbid, that we should have been so selfish and unbrotherly as to have insisted upon, even had you been pleased to follow the instructions with which you come furnished, and there is as little ambiguity with respect to the end of your Mission, as to its objects, it was to *consolidate* the Congregation which you found disorganised and distracted, and which having the right to the exclusive enjoyment of your ministrations has, in point of fact, never been permitted to see your face. I cannot help bringing this before you in justice to my people who may be well excused if they have felt some indignation against those by whose counsel and influence they have been shamefully beguiled of that provision which the Mother Church had made for their special advantage. I cannot conceive any greater reproach that can be attached to a body of religious professors than that of setting at naught the claims of justice and right in order to carry out what they may deem the best and holiest ends. Forgive me for again troubling you, (it is for the last time) on this painful and distressing subject, and believe me, my dear Sir,

Very faithfully and affectionately,

Your Brother in the Lord,
(Signed)

H. ESSON.

[To Rev. W. Arnot.]

The following extract from the amended Constitution of St. Gabriel Street Church, will prove how far the spirit and views of the Office-bearers and people are sound and satisfactory. See, in connexion with these, the resolutions of the Meeting of the Congregation—Appendix [A.] :—

At a General Meeting of the Temporal Proprietors of the Scotch Presbyterian Church, St. Gabriel Street, Montreal, held on this thirtieth day of June, 1845, in said Church, it was unanimously resolved—

That so far as much as the Members of the Scotch Presbyterian Church, St. Gabriel Street, Montreal, at a General Meeting of the Congregation held in that Church on the 28th day of August, 1844, with only one dissenting voice, "did approve (to adopt the words of their Second Resolution), the conduct of the minority of the Synod in connection with the Established Church of Scotland, and determined to adhere to their protest, and to follow them in the course which they have taken"—it is manifest that they did virtually annul all previous rules and regulations inconsistent with this Resolution, and so far as the Proprietors, in like manner, at a meeting held on the Tuesday following, September 2, said year, in the same place—"approving of the consistent and conscientious conduct of their minister," did admit their sanction to the principles of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, and by that act virtually repealed all previous laws and rules contrary thereto—it is hereby declared in virtue of the resolutions and proceedings of said Meetings, that the following Rules and Regulations, revised and corrected, so as to be conformable to the standards and practice of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, shall be printed and subscribed by all the Temporal Proprietors, as the necessary qualification for the exercise of their rights; and that these shall henceforth be held as the only authorised Rules and Regulations of the Scotch Presbyterian Church, St. Gabriel street, City of Montreal.

6th.—That in the election of a Pastor, when a vacancy shall occur, and in all that pertains to the conduct of spiritual affairs the congregation shall conform invariably to the laws and prescriptions of the Ecclesiastical authorities, Proprietors as such have no right or power whatever to intermeddle with spiritual things, except they be communicants, or full members of the Church.

7th.—No Proprietor or Pew holder shall be permitted to have any voice or vote in the Temporal or Spiritual concerns of the Church, who is known to be a member of any other Church or Congregation.

13th.—That in the mean time while it is expedient for the security of the Temporal Property of the Church, to leave the Temporalities to be managed as heretofore, it shall be understood that the power of the Proprietors of Pews shall be interpreted and limited by the laws and standards of the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

14th.—It is further declared by the Proprietors herewith subscribing, that they are ready to conform in all respects to the principles of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, and the enactments of her ecclesiastical authorities in all spiritual things, and are even prepared, should it be found necessary or expedient to sacrifice their rights as Proprietors, in order that the great ends of the spiritual government of the Church may be attained.

3. Resolved.—That in consequence of surmises having gone abroad, that the conditions of the deed of sale of the land on which the Scotch Presbyterian Church of St. Gabriel street, in the City of Montreal, is built, have been violated by recent proceedings, the Proprietors hereby declare, on behalf of themselves and the Congregation, that nothing has been changed, nothing enacted or determined, affecting either the temporal or spiritual government of the Congregation, which is in anywise inconsistent with the deed of purchase of the land, on which the Church is built, or with any fundamental or constitutional law of said Church, known to the Proprietors, or which can be shown to exceed the power and authority vested in them, and actually exercised by themselves and their predecessors, since the year 1804, in which year the Constitution of the Church was

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changed in a much greater degree, at a general meeting of the Congregation than it was in the recent meeting, held on the 28th of August, 1844.

The language of the Deed bears, that the ground which forms the Site of the Church, was sold to the members of the Committee, "elected by all the Members of the Presbyterian Congregation, resident in this city and places adjacent, for the glory of God and Divine Service, according to the usage of the Members of the said Presbyterian Congregation, and their successors in future, according to and conformably with the usage of the Church of Scotland, such as it is established by law in Scotland."

The Proprietors hereby declare, on behalf of themselves and the Congregation, that while this Congregation owns no subjection and have never owned any to the jurisdiction of the Established Church of Scotland, and have never pledged themselves, as will be manifest from the Records of the Congregation, to any Connection whatever, save that of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, they still adhere to the Westminster Standards, which are the professed Standards of the established Church of Scotland; and they have in no respects deviated from the usage of that Church in the manner of performing *Divine Service* or Public Worship; neither is it their intention, or consistent with their principles, to make any alteration in the said Standards, or to admit of any departure from the old and established usage of *Divine Service*, as it has been and is still conducted in this Congregation. The Proprietors would here point to the terms of the Deed above quoted—that at the date of said Deed, namely, the 2nd of April, 1792, the constitution of the Church was, what it is now in progress of being made—*purely and in the highest degree popular*—for the members of the Committee therein named were then, as it is recorded in the Deed, elected by all the Members of the Congregation, so that the recent changes and amendments of the Constitution are only bringing it back to its original purity and soundness, prior to the general meeting of the 4th of April, 1804, when it was subjected to a most Erastianizing process, amounting to a revolution in its constitution and government. Thus, in point of fact, the Church is now brought back very nearly to its Constitution, as it stood at the date of the purchase of the Site of the Church.

[P.]

MONTREAL, August 28, 1844.

A meeting of the Members and Sitters in St. Gabriel Street Church, took place this evening, when an address on the recent disruption of the Synod of Canada, was delivered by the Rev. Mr. Gordon of Gananoque; on the conclusion of the address, the Hon. Adam Ferrie, was called to the Chair.

It was then moved by Dr. McNider, seconded by Mr. J. Turner—*Resolved*, 1st. That this Congregation, feeling themselves bound to take cognisance in their collective capacity, of the question which for some time has agitated, and has now broken up the Presbyterian Church, in this Province, desire to record their firm attachment to the great principles of the Supreme Headship of Christ, and the Sole authority of the Word of God, in matters Spiritual and Ecclesiastical, believing these principals to be essential at all times, and in all lands to the purity and prosperity of the Christian Church; which resolution was put, and unanimously carried.—Mr. John Fisher, alone objecting.

Moved by Mr. Wm. Hutchison, seconded by Mr. Wm. Bethune—2nd. That considering the repeated testimonies borne in favour of the aforesaid principles, by the Synod of Canada, this Congregation have viewed with surprise and regret the recent conduct of a majority of the Synod in adhering to the ranks, and strengthening the hands of those who have brought these principles into peril, and approving as they do of the conduct of the minority of the Synod, in presenting an unbroken and consistent testimony to the truth, resolve to adhere to their protest, and by God's grace to follow them in the course which they have taken; which resolution was put, and unanimously carried.—Mr. John Fisher, alone objecting.

Moved by Wm. Murray, Esq., seconded by Archibald Macfarlane, Esq.—3rd. That this Congregation, cordially approving of the conduct of their esteemed

Pastor, in the present crisis commend his fidelity to his principles and professions, and now declare their resolution, to adhere to him and to the righteous cause, for which he is contending, and to maintain him by all lawful means, in the *status*, which he has so long held as minister of St. Gabriel Street Church.

The meeting was then closed by the Rev. Mr. Henry, with a most impressive prayer, and the Apostolic Benediction.

[Q.]

Resolutions passed at a General Meeting of the Temporal Proprietors of St. Gabriel Street Church, held on the 2nd September, 1844:—

1st.—The Proprietors of St. Gabriel Street Presbyterian Church, considering the separation of the Rev. Henry Esson, Minister of the said Church, from the Synod of Canada, in connexion with the Established Church of Scotland, and his adherence to the recently formed Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, feel bound to declare, that in their judgment, the Constitution of the Church has in no article been violated or broken by the said action of the Minister; and that by the course he has seen fit to adopt, he has not forfeited, in the least degree, his position or his rights, as pastor of this Church. Which resolution being put from the chair, and the roll being called over by the Treasurer, there appeared for the motion, thirty-two; against the motion, three. The motion was then declared to be carried.

2nd.—That the Proprietors, recognizing no jurisdiction or authority whatever over St. Gabriel Street Church, either by the Synod of Canada, in connexion with the Established Church of Scotland, or by any of the Presbyteries constituting said Synod, regard the recent conduct of the Presbytery of Montreal, in connexion with that body, in declaring the Rev. Henry Esson no longer Minister of this Church, as an act of unwarrantable interference; and approving, as the Proprietors here distinctly do, of the consistent and conscientious conduct of their Minister, in the present crisis, resolve to continue to him, all the temporal rights and emoluments, which he has heretofore enjoyed, and to resist, by all lawful means, any attempts, by any individuals or party, who may seek to procure his ejection. Which resolution being put from the chair, was declared to be carried by the same majority as the former.